REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, and 10-12 are pending in this application. Claims 2, 4-9, and 13-20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

II.

Claims 1, 3, and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. On page 2, the Office Action states that Claim 1 inferentially sets forth the recitation "undried ink from a previously printed side of the sheet." Claim 1 has been amended to recite a printing unit configured to print an image on a sheet of paper "having undried ink previously printed on one side." Applicants submit that Claim 1 now clearly complies with the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Support for the amendment to Claim 1 is found on page 10, line 23 through page 14, line 16 and in Fig. 1. The amendment is made merely to further clarify the meaning implicit in claim 1 as previously presented. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1, 3, and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

III.

On page 10 line 23 through page 14 line 16, the present specification describes in detail the performance during both double-sided and multi-color printing operations. More particularly, during a double-sided printing operation, the printed sheet 3 is set on the paper supply tray 4 with the printed side facing downwardly so that at the time of conveying the printed sheet 3, the lower resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 come into contact with the

printed side of the printed sheet 3. When the printed side of the printed sheet 3 is not yet dry, the undried ink is transferred to the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2. The undried ink transferred onto the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 is spread thinly and reduced on the contact part between the periphery of the resist roller 11b and the periphery of the removing roller 12 and on the contact part between the periphery of the press roller 2 and the periphery of the removing roller 12. Consequently, the amount of ink on the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 is spread thinly and reduced by a transfer of a part of the undried ink to the periphery of the removing roller 12. The ink is thinly spread and the area of the ink in contact with the air increases so that the ink is dried more quickly. The retransfer of the undried ink, passed to the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2, is suppressed to the printed side of the printed sheet 3 so that the printed sheet 3 will not be smudged.

A similar phenomenon occurs during multi-color printing between the pick-up roller 8, separation roller 9, and resist roller 11a, but the undried ink on the printed sheet 3 is on the top side thereof.

IV.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ito (JP 10-166705) (hereinafter "JP '705"). This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to Claim 1 as presently amended.

The outstanding Office Action relies on the apparatus shown in Fig. 5 of JP '705. Previous Office Actions have based rejections on Figs 1 and 3, respectively, but those rejections have been dropped after considering applicant's previous responses.

The problem to be solved by the apparatus shown in Fig. 5 of JP '705 is totally different from the problem addressed by the present invention, and it fails to teach or suggest the present invention. That is, the apparatus shown if Fig. 5 of JP '705 comprises blotter

rollers 52 to absorb excess ink on the middle imprint object, i.e., the roller 4, and squeezing rollers 54 to squeeze the absorbed ink out of the blotter rollers 52 into casings 56. First of all, the ink absorbed by the rollers 52 disclosed by JP '705 is ink applied to the middle impact roller by the printing cylinders 44 or 46; it does not come from a sheet of paper having undried ink previously printed on one side as set forth in claim 1. Secondly, the rollers 52 disclosed by JP '705 do not spread undried ink as further set forth in claim 1; they merely absorb the ink and transfer it to the casing 56 by the action of the squeeze rollers 54. Thirdly, claim 1 requires the guide path to be above the press roller. The guide path for the sheet of paper 6 shown in Fig. 5 of JP '705 is below the middle impact roller 4. The roller 8 of JP '705 is below the guide path of the sheet 6, but it does not have any removing roller associated with it. Therefore, JP '705 clearly fails to teach the subject matter defined by claim 1. Moreover, JP '705 fails to suggest the subject matter defined by claim 1. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C 102(b) be withdrawn.

V.

Claims 3 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito (JP '705) as applied to claim 1 and in view of Asano et al. (US patent No. 5,636,929).

Claims 3 and 10-12 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Asano et al. fails to make up for the deficiencies in JP '705 with the respect to the subject matter of claim 1. Accordingly, claims 3 and 10-12 patentably distinguish over the applied references for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1. In this respect, as pointed out in column 7 lines 50-58 of Asano et al., the spur cleaner 41 contacts the teeth 40A and 40B at different positions so that the spur cleaner can more affectively absorb or remove the ink from the teeth 40A and 40B. That is, the spur cleaner 41 disclosed by Asano et al. does not spread and reduce the undried ink as required by the at least one removing roller recited in claim 1, but

rather the spur cleaner 41 absorbs the ink from the teeth 40A and 40B. Moreover, it is only through improper hindsight using applicant's disclosure as a template that one having ordinary skill in the art would attempt to combine the teachings of the applied references in the manner proposed in the Office Action. The roller configuration set forth in claim 3 is not taught or suggested by JP '705. Moreover, JP '705 discloses a stencil printer, whereas Asano et al. is directed to an ink jet printer of a totally different construction. The spur gears 40A and 40B disclosed by Asano et al. cooperate with ejection rollers 4 to eject the paper 6 from the printer (see column 5 lines 21-28). No similar ejection system is disclosed by JP '705. Therefore, one having ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to even try to combine the applied references in the manner proposed in the Office Action. Moreover, neither of the applied references discloses a pair of resist rollers as set forth in claims 10-12. That is, the resist rollers 11a and 11b disclosed in the present application feed the sheet of paper previously printed on one side to the printer, whereas the rollers 104 and 105 of Asano et al. relied upon in the Office Action eject the sheet of paper 6 from the printer. In addition, the roller 105 disclosed by Asano et al. does not have any removing roller associated therewith. Accordingly, it would not be cleaned if the lower side of the sheet of paper 6 were previously printed as recited in claim 1. Therefore, whether taken alone, or in any proper combination, the applied references fail to teach or suggest the subject matter in independent claim 1 and dependent claims 3 and 10-12.

VI.

For the reasons stated above, applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3 and 10-12.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599
James R. Boler
Registration No. 37,058

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

GJM/JRB/law
I:\ATTY\JRB\6195-0074\AMENDMENT 24 NOV 03.DOC